

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 EB-07 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4742

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6883

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, XF

SUBJ: REACTION TO GOI DECISION ON JERUSALEM AREA
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

REF: TEL AVIV 6809

1. MIXED ISRAELI ASSESSMENT OF GOI DECISION (REFTEL) TO MOVE
AHEAD IN INDUSTRIAL-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF JERUSALEM AREA
IS REFLECTED IN CONTRASTING EDITORIALS IN NOV 26 EDITIONS OF TWO
LEADING ISRAELI DAILIES.

2. DAVAR ARGUES THAT DECISION WILL PRODUCE BENEFITS FOR BOTH
JEWISH AND ARAB CITIZENS OF JERUSALEM, AS ANOTHER STEP IN
FORTIFYING "UNITED JERUSALEM". DAVAR ALSO FINDS TIMING APPROPRIATE,
SINCE THERE "COULD NOT HAVE BEEN A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE ISRAELI
REACTION" TO RECENT UNESCO RESOLUTIONS. MOREOVER, DECISION COINCIDES
WITH ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH OF

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BEN GURION, WHOSE VISION INCLUDED DEVELOPMENT OF JERUSALEM.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS DECISION, IN DAVAR VIEW, WILL STRIKE PROPER BALANCE BETWEEN "GROWTH OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN ITS HOMELAND" AND "LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN FOR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE PEACE AND DETENTE". EDITORIAL CONCLUDES THAT IT IS NOW UP TO GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE ITS CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT ITS DECISIONS.

3. HAARETZ, IN CRITICAL COMMENTARY, POINTS OUT THAT INDUSTRIAL PARK REFERRED TO IN LATEST GOI DECISION IS OUTSIDE AREA THAT KNESSET DECLARED IN 1967 TO BE "UNDER THE JURISDICTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL". EDITORIAL TAKES ISSUE WITH DENIAL BY INFOMIN YARIV THAT DECISION WAS RELATED TO DEVELOPMENTS AT RABAT OR UN. IF IN FACT PURPOSE IS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT ISRAEL IS NOT IMPRESSED BY HOSTILE RESOLUTIONS AND THAT SHE INTENDS TO PURSUE HER RIGHT OF SETTLEMENT IN THE TERRITORIES, THEN HAARETZ BELIEVES THIS SHOULD BE STATED LOUD AND CLEAR. IF, ON OTHER HAND, DECISION IS DESIRABLE IN MORE NARROW CONTEXT OF GREATER JERUSALEM DEVELOPMENT (AS INFERRED BY YARIV), WHY OF ALL PLACES SHOULD INDUSTRIAL PARK BE BUILT ON ROAD TO JERICHO? WHAT ARE ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES, WHAT RESOURCES ARE REQUIRED AND WHERE WILL THEY COME FROM? HAARETZ SPECULATES THAT REAL PURPOSE OF GOI DECISION WAS TO APPEASE LIKUD AND HARDLINERS IN NRP. IN ANY CASE, UNLESS GOI MOVES AHEAD WITH RAPID IMPLEMENTATION, THERE IS NO OTHER RATIONALE FOR TIMING OF DECISION AT THIS DIFFICULT MOMENT.

4. USUALLY WELL INFORMED JOURNALIST HAS TOLD US THAT IN HIS JUDGMENT THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT GOI DECISION REPRESENTED REACTION TO RABAT AND UN RESOLUTIONS ON PLO. IT WAS VIRTUALLY INCONCEIVABLE, HE SAID, THAT GOI WOULD HAVE TAKEN SUCH A DECISION A MONTH AGO. EVEN NOW, HE NOTED, THERE HAD BEEN SERIOUS OPPOSITION WITHIN THE CABINET, WITH MORE MODERATE ELEMENTS FORCED INTO MINORITY.

5. NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY KNESSET WHIP AVRAHAM MELAMED, AN OUTSPOKEN MODERATE ON TERRITORIAL ISSUES INCLUDING WEST BANK, TOLD US NOVEMBER 26 THAT GOI DECISION REPRESENTED APPEASEMENT OF HARDLINERS AND WAS INDEX OF WEAKNESS AND INSECURITY OF GOVERNMENT COALITION. HE ILLUSTRATED GOVERNMENT'S SITUATION BY QUOTING PUNGENT HEBREW PROVERB TO EFFECT THAT THE

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DOG WALKS IN FRONT OF HIS MASTER BUT ALWAYS LOOKS OVER HIS SHOULDER TO SEE WHAT HIS MASTER WANTS HIM TO DO BEFORE PROCEEDING FORWARD.

6. COMMENT: CONTENT OF DAVAR EDITORIAL IS UNSURPRISING, SINCE IT IS OFTEN THOUGH NOT ALWAYS SPOKESMAN FOR AND DEFENDER OF OFFICIAL POLICY. HAARETZ REACTION IS PROBABLY SOMEWHAT CLOSER TO THAT OF INFORMED ISRAELIS WHO ARE GENERALLY

DISINCLINED TO TAKE GOI RATIONALE GIVEN
TO FOREIGN PRESS AT FACE VALUE. WE DOUBT THAT YARIV
HIMSELF IS SUFFICIENTLY DISINGENUOUS TO BELIEVE THAT TIMEING
OF GOI DECISION WAS PURELY COINCIDENTIAL . OUR OWN VIEW IS THAT
DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS AS WELL AS REACTION TO RABAT
AND UNGA HAD GREAT DEAL TO DO WITH DECISION.
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